

Washington, DC – Last night Congressman Joe Sestak (D-PA) voted for the Transportation and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Appropriations Bill. The Congressman fought to ensure it included key provisions to help the district. — “This bill provides much needed funding to move our infrastructure into the 21st century. By doing this we improve the nation and district’s transportation systems while creating jobs and protecting the environment,” said the Congressman, “My goals in Congress have always been to improve environmental and economic security, this legislation does both.”

Congressman Sestak secured \$500,000 for Hybrid Electric Buses. The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) will purchase 100, 40 foot, low floor alternative fuel hybrid (diesel/electric) powered buses. Hybrid systems use two sources of power to move a vehicle – an engine and battery. This will greatly improve air quality in the areas where the busses are used. They use ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel combined with electric propulsion systems. These buses will be operated throughout the five county SEPTA service area: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties.

Congressman Sestak successfully fought for the Paoli Transportation Center. This bill includes \$500,000 for the Center. SEPTA is the nation’s fifth largest public transportation system. This project will include the engineering and construction of a multi-modal transportation center in Paoli, Chester County. The new facility will be located on SEPTA’s R5 Paoli/Thorndale Regional Rail line west of the existing station. The existing Paoli Station is one of the most utilized SEPTA passenger facilities outside of Center City Philadelphia with average daily ridership of 2800 passengers. Four SEPTA bus routes - 105, 133, 204, and 206 - provide feeder service at this station. These bus routes serve the growing employment areas of Chester and Montgomery Counties. In addition, private operators and area employers use vans and mini-buses at this station to transport passengers to respective employment centers. This facility provides intermodal access between bus service in Chester County and rail service to Philadelphia. In addition, the Paoli Station serves Amtrak trains bound for points west to Harrisburg, Pittsburgh and Chicago and east of the station to Philadelphia, Washington, and New York. This station complex will be reconstructed to address the needs of the ever-increasing number of bus and train customers using this facility.

In addition, the Congressman included a provision for \$500,000 for the Upper Darby Township Market Street Gateway Site B Parking Garage, which will be built by the Federal Transit Administration. Delaware County will construct a 310 space public parking garage that will support SEPTA’s 69th Street Terminal, surrounding retail merchants and an adjacent 60,000 square foot office building. Parking in and around the 69th Street Terminal and adjacent businesses is in short supply. A new garage for the businesses and commuters will promote

Upper Darby Township's redevelopment efforts.

Congressman Sestak was also successful in getting \$500,000 for US 422 River Crossing Complex Projects (RCC). The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation will address major traffic and transportation problems in the US 422 Schuylkill River Crossing area. The RCC plans several actions to achieve their goal: (1) widen US 422 to three lanes (four over Schuylkill River) to accommodate over 100,000 daily commuters by 2030; (2) modify PA 23 Interchange, the primary access to Valley Forge Park; and (3) complete the PA 363 Interchange, currently allowing for access to US 422 East and from US 422 West only.

"These provisions will help people in their daily lives by making it easier to get to and from work. These provisions also will make the systems more environmentally friendly and create much needed jobs in the regions affected," added the Congressman. "I work every day to improve the lives of my constituents and this bill does that many ways. I am proud to vote for it."

In addition, in an effort to suspend the Federal Aviation Administration's Airspace Redesign proposal until a GAO investigation of the project's operational efficiencies is completed, Congressman Sestak joined colleagues in supporting an amendment by Representative Scott Garrett (R-NJ), Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ), and Chris Shays (R-CT) to prohibit the use of funds by the FAA to implement the New York/New Jersey/Philadelphia Airspace Redesign project. The amendment was defeated on the House floor.

The Transportation-HUD appropriations bill does a lot more to help seniors, people with disabilities, rural communities and improve our nation's transportation infrastructure. Specifically the bill addresses those issues by doing the following:

Housing/Community Development

Section 8 housing vouchers. The President's inadequate budget for Section 8 would have forced between 40,000 and 80,000 families and individuals to lose their housing vouchers. The bill provides an increase above the President's budget of \$330 million for tenant-based vouchers and nearly \$667 million for projected-based vouchers in order to renew all current Section 8 vouchers, so no one who has a tenant-based voucher will lose it. In addition, included within this amount is \$30 million for 4,000 new, targeted vouchers for homeless veterans and for non-elderly people with disabilities.

Housing for seniors: The President's budget proposes slashing the Section 202 housing program for low-income seniors by \$160 million or 22 percent below 2007. The bill rejects this cut – instead providing \$734.5 million, the same as 2007. The President has proposed significant cuts in this program year after year. And yet, there are currently ten seniors waiting for each senior housing unit that becomes available.

Housing for people with disabilities: The President's budget proposes slashing Section 811 housing for people with disabilities program by \$112 million or 47 percent below 2007. The bill rejects this cut – instead providing \$236.6 million, the same as 2007. This is a vitally needed program – with a continuing inadequate supply of this type of housing.

HOPE VI Program. The President's budget proposes eliminating the highly successful HOPE VI program, which revitalizes distressed and obsolete public housing projects – but the bill rejects this elimination and instead provides \$120 million, \$21 million over 2007. In HOPE VI projects, for every government dollar, there has been generated three or four private sector dollars. HOPE VI projects have been credited with helping transform and revitalize communities across the United States.

Community Development Block Grant: The President's budget proposes slashing the Community Development Block Grant, which local communities use to address challenges like affordable housing and economic development, by \$735 million or 19 percent below 2007. The bill rejects this cut – instead providing \$4 billion, or \$228 million above 2007. This funding level is still \$400 million below funding in 2001, as the GOP-controlled Congress shortchanged this vital program for years.

Transportation

Airport modernization, safety and efficiency grants: The President's budget proposes slashing these grants by \$765 million or 22 percent below 2007. The bill rejects this cut – and instead provides \$3.6 billion, or \$86 million above 2007. In a time of rapidly growing air travel, these grants are more vital than ever. These grants are needed to ease congestion and prepare our nation's airport infrastructure to handle an anticipated 1 billion passengers by 2015.

Highway infrastructure: The bill provides \$40.2 billion, \$1.25 billion above 2007 and \$631 million above the President's request, to improve and maintain our nation's aging highway infrastructure. The increase meets the fully authorized level established in SAFETEA-LU and

will create almost 59,500 jobs across all sectors of the economy.

Mass transit: The bill provides \$9.7 billion, \$782 million above 2007 and \$334 million above the President's request, for the activities of the Federal Transit Administration. Included within this amount is an increase of \$300 million for capital investment grants, an increase which is expected to generate as many as 17,400 new jobs and yield \$1.8 billion in economic benefits to state and local communities.

Amtrak: The President's budget proposes slashing Amtrak by \$394 million or 30 percent below 2007, which would have resulted in the loss of intercity passenger rail service to many communities. Therefore, the bill rejects this cut, providing \$1.4 billion, in order to preserve a national system and assist Amtrak in making capital investments to improve the railroad's overall service and reliability.

Rural Communities

Essential Air Service: The President's budget proposes slashing the Essential Air Service program, which ensures essential air service to small and rural communities, by 50 percent. The President's proposal would have resulted in the elimination of air service to nearly one-half of the communities that currently receive service. The bill rejects this cut – instead providing \$110 million, or \$600,000 above 2007.

Rural Housing and Economic Development: The President's budget also proposes eliminating the Rural Housing and Economic Development program, which is designed to revitalize economically depressed rural communities. The bill rejects this elimination – and instead provides \$16.8 million, the same as 2007.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking

former military officer ever elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.